

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.
156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

March 5, 1930.

To The Members of the Board

Dear Friends:

At the last meeting of the Foreign Department Committee there was some discussion of the questions involved in the proposed scheme of union of the Churches in southern India. We are not at present involved in this scheme, as none of our missionaries or the Churches which have grown out of their work are related to the bodies which have developed this scheme. Ultimately, however, we are concerned, as in all probability if the southern India scheme goes through a proposal will be made for union between the resulting Church and the corresponding Church bodies in northern India, namely, the Anglican Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Church of North India, which embraces our missionaries and the Church which resulted from their work, together with the missionaries and resulting Churches of the American Congregational Missions, and the Irish and Scotch Presbyterian Missions.

There will be an even nearer relationship on our part than this to the proposed basis of union in South India through our Missions in Persia which have been considering with the Church of England/^{MIS 184} in southern Persia the questions of the establishment of a United Persian Church.

For several years this matter has been under discussion in Persia, especially between Bishop Linton, the Anglican Bishop in Isfahan who is a most evangelistic and evangelical man, and our missionaries in Hamadan and Teheran. There have been many conferences between the Anglican missionaries and our own and they have been most harmonious. There have been interchange of pulpits and fellowship and common participation in the Communion service. There has been no carefully worked out plan, however, such as the "proposed scheme of union in South India". But there has been discussion of the central issue as to whether we Presbyterians would be prepared for Church union on an Episcopal basis or whether, on the other hand, the Anglican friends in Persia could secure the consent of the Church at home to their union on a basis that surrendered the High Church interpretation of the episcopacy.

The first step in the matter was to be Bishop Linton's presentation of the case to the coming Lambeth Conference. Friends in the Church of England and in the Church Missionary Society, which sustains the Anglican work in Persia, felt, however, that it would be better for the issue to come before the Lambeth Conference on the basis of the India scheme. The India scheme is fully worked out; it has the support of all the Anglican bishops in India, a large and representative company including some of the most influential bishops in the Anglican Communion, and it is already thoroughly familiar to the home constituency. What Persia proposes would be in a far less advantageous position and would have only Bishop Linton as its field spokesman, and it does not have the understanding and the backing which the South India scheme has in the home Church.

Mr. Cash, the secretary of the Church Missionary Society, talked over these matters very fully with Bishop Linton, Mr. Allen and me in Jerusalem, and he and I had long conferences over the subject at Williamstown last summer. We were agreed that it was probably better to let the Persia problem wait until the Lambeth Conference has passed on the India scheme.

If, however, our Board is of the opinion that we could not go into any scheme that involved the acceptance of the episcopacy in any form it would not be fair to let our Anglican friends in Persia go forward without some intimation of our attitude. Thus far they have had no word from us that would lead them to think that the path is barred to any possible Church union that involved an Episcopal element in its scheme of government.

In one sense, perhaps, the matter is not for us to decide either in India or in Persia. In both fields the Churches involved are ecclesiastically independent of our General Assembly and are free to determine their own policies. On the other hand, our missionaries are clearly involved in Persia now. In any future proposal in India they will be involved as members of the United Church of North India.

In Persia the situation is incipient inasmuch as the proposed union will be primarily of the Persian Christians who have been converted from Mohammedanism rather than the Assyrian groups. As yet there are no large organized bodies as in India but only a few small congregations.

In any view, however, it would certainly seem to be a wise thing for our Board to consider the question as a general question of policy. Would the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. be willing to consider any scheme of Church union which recognized the episcopacy in any form, or would it not? Of course, the General Assembly is the only body that could determine this matter and it could not do so as regards any union into which it was to enter without reference of the matter to the Presbyteries. The immediate question, however, is not as to whether our Church would consider such a union but whether it would allow its missionaries on the field to cooperate with native Churches which might enter into such union. At this point my own judgment would be unhesitatingly affirmative. There is, however, the further question as to how our missionaries should act in the way of promoting or hindering such unions. Should they be neutral, or should they use their influence actively either for or against? This is the real form in which the question would come before us now for discussion.

In order that the discussion might be intelligent the Foreign Department Committee has instructed me to supply some of the necessary material.

The first document to be cited which brings the matter directly into focus is the following letter from Bishop Linton to Mr. Allen and Mr. Wilson, the secretaries of our East and West Persia Missions:

Isfahan, Persia, December 3, 1929.

"I have an interesting communication from the Ecclesiastical Committee of the C.M.S. re our proposals for a United Church here in Persia, and I should be glad to consult you both about it. I shall just acknowledge the letter and say I am consulting you about it and will reply fully later on. Their letter is as follows:

"We are writing you on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Committee of the C.M.S. with reference to the Reunion movement in Persia, of which we have read in the Persia Diocesan Letter and in which we are deeply interested.

Double space → We notice in the Report that the Conference has asked you to present to the forthcoming meeting of the Lambeth Conference, among other things, the need of the Evangelical Churches in Persia for unhampered freedom in working out their own development and, the Fundamental Principles of Union that they have adopted.

'Now, you must have followed with much interest the history of the development/ of the

South India United Church Scheme, and have probably had an opportunity of making a special study of it. You know how complete and elaborate the scheme is and how great care has been taken to preserve every catholic principle and to secure that the United Church may still maintain Communion and Fellowship with the mother Churches. Nevertheless the scheme is not without its critics and some of its provisions have aroused quite formidable opposition in a certain quarter.

space → 'It seems to us that the future of the whole reunion movement, not in India only but in other countries as well, depends largely on how this South India scheme is dealt with at the forthcoming Lambeth Conference, and we cannot help feeling some anxiety lest the fact of having other less mature schemes presented at the same time may strengthen the hands of the opponents and so prejudice the case of the South India Proposals. For the sake of the future of the whole Christian Church we feel that we ought to do everything in our power to avoid anything that might make it more difficult for the promoters of the scheme to obtain the approval they so earnestly desire.

space → 'The Persian scheme, so far as we can see, does not profess to be a mature and complete scheme and constitution. It merely lays down principles of union and asks for permission for the Evangelical Churches of Persia to work out their own scheme on these lines and, doubtless, since this was never meant to be its final form, it has not been thought necessary to secure the same precision of expression as is so characteristic of the S.I. scheme, and there are certainly some points in the 'Fundamental Principles of Union' and 'Steps toward Union' in the Persian Diocesan Letter which we fear would immediately be seized upon by the critics and might lead to the rejection of both schemes.

space → 'We therefore want definitely to suggest that another meeting of the Inter-church Conference (or some other committee competent to act for it) be called, to meet between now and Lambeth, in order to work out the scheme of union for Persia as fully and completely as has been done for South India. In doing this the conference will have the advantage of having before it the S.I. scheme, to which so much time and thought have been devoted, and which has gained so large a measure of assent throughout India. To avoid delay we are sending you, under cover, twelve points of the S. I. scheme. We need hardly say that, if it were possible for the Conference to adopt this scheme and present an identical plan for Persia, it would mean an immense strengthening, not only of the case for South India, but of the whole Reunion movement throughout the world.

space → 'In our judgment it would be a great gain if your Interchurch Conference found it possible to adopt the principles laid down in pages #1 to #11 of the South India proposals. The details of a constitution could be worked out if desired, after the Lambeth Conference has met. If this procedure could be followed you would be providing a most valuable illustration for Lambeth of the way in which other countries are prepared to go forward towards unity on the four points of the Lambeth pronouncement of 1888 as adopted by the Churches in South India.

space → 'We realize that you may feel that the time is very short to do all that we suggest. We want you to know that the Ecclesiastical Committee is anxious to help in any way possible. You may feel, for instance, that you have not the necessary legal advice at hand; the Ecclesiastical Committee will gladly undertake to have any proposals you may send us cast into formal shape for you in time for Lambeth Conference, and thus it would only be necessary for you to send us the proposals in the form in which they are passed. If they can be made to take the form of alterations to the S.I. scheme the work will be so much the lighter for the Committee.

space → 'In conclusion, we have only to assure you of our warm sympathy with you in the work you are doing, of our deep interest in the Reunion movement in Persia and our constant prayers for God's blessing upon you and the diocese over which you preside.

space → 'Very faithfully yours,

(Signed) H. W. Hinde
John Hind, Bp.'

"With regard to the foregoing, H. W. Hinde is a prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, a very strong Evangelical, who led the opposition to the Revised Prayer Book, and he is a personal friend of mine and one whom I can trust. Bishop Hind is Bishop of Fuhkien in China, and is also leading a big movement toward unity in China. He is a C.M.S. missionary, and a staunch Evangelical, and has taken a bold lead in Intercommunion services. I also know him personally and can trust him absolutely.

Space → "At our Diocesan Conference on November 22nd the following resolution was passed unanimously:

'Interchurch Union - The Bishop spoke of the possibilities of Church Union in South India, and proposed that a Committee be elected from the Northern and Southern Churches to go through the Proposals of the South India United Church and that what they agree to and approve be put forward for acceptance by the Persia Churches. Carr Unan.

'The archdeacon therefore proposed that four members from the North and four from the South should be elected, and that the election of four members of this Committee from the South be held in the Diocesan Council. Carr Unan.

'There was a proposal made that the four members should be one English and three Persians. No decision was arrived at as to the membership of the Committee.'

"I should be very glad if you would both go through the South India Proposals, and let me have your opinion as to the possibility of falling in with the proposals in the foregoing letter from Prebendary Hinde and Bishop Hind. Perhaps you would also consult as many members of your Mission as possible, and if possible any of your local church whom you think could express a useful opinion, and let me know what you feel about it. I will also go through the S.I. proposals and write again to you, and I shall consult Garland and if possible some Persian Christians also. I am strongly of the opinion that before I go to Lambeth we ought to go very carefully into the S.I. proposals with a view to making our own proposals more definite. The opposition is on the part of the extreme Anglo-Catholics, headed by Bishop Gore, though an Anglo-Catholic like the late Bishop of Bombay supports the S.I. scheme. The others threaten to lead a secession from the Church if the present scheme of S.I. passes!

Space → "Would you consider a suggestion that we should have a small preliminary meeting, say in Teheran, almost immediately, to study together the S.I. proposals? I should very gladly go either to Teheran or Hamadan and possibly I might get Garland to go with me. My feeling is that if a few of us (missionaries) got together and went through the S.I. scheme, we could then more usefully have a larger meeting with several Persians to draw up additions or alterations to our present scheme for presentation to the churches, and then if necessary plan to have another Interchurch Conference, say in Teheran, about Nov^r Ruz.

"Yours very sincerely, (Signed) J. H. Linton, Bishop of Persia."

This letter has been forwarded by Mr. Allen with the following statement:

"Church Union - I was just on the point of writing Dr. Speer on the subject of church union when his letter came. He will be much interested in a letter which has just come from Bishop Linton, of which I enclose him a copy. I have written him in reply that I shall be glad to meet him in Teheran (probably some time next month) to talk the matter over with him informally together with some of our other missionaries. I should

be very glad indeed to have Dr. Speer's reaction to the South India proposals, whether he thinks them a feasible solution of the problem, and what he thinks our Church at home would say to such a solution (though I understand that our Church does not wish to bind us in any way in matters of this kind.)

"Very sincerely yours, (Signed) C. H. Allen."

The next material which the Board will wish to have is a digest of the provisions in the proposed scheme of union in South India with regard to the episcopate. This scheme contemplates the union of the following:

The Church of India, Burma and Ceylon
The South India United Church
and
The South India Provincial Synod of
The Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The sections relating to the episcopate in the proposed United Church are as follows:

"THE EPISCOPATE IN THE UNITED CHURCH.

"The uniting Churches, recognizing that the episcopate, the councils of the presbyters and the congregation of the faithful must all have their appropriate places in the order of life of the United Church, accept in particular the historic episcopate in a constitutional form (as part of their basis of union, without intending thereby to imply, or to express a judgment on, any theory concerning episcopacy.

"The meaning in which the uniting Churches thus accept a historic and constitutional episcopacy is that in the united Church:

Space / "(1) the bishops shall perform their functions in accordance with the customs of the Church, those functions being named and defined in the written constitution of the united Church;

Space / "(2) the bishops shall be elected, both the diocese concerned in each particular case and the authorities of the united Church as a whole having an effective voice in their appointment;

Space / "(3) continuity with the historic episcopate shall both initially and thereafter be effectively maintained, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate is thereby implied or shall be demanded from any minister or member of the united Church; and

Space / "(4) every ordination of presbyters shall be performed by the laying on of hands of the bishop and presbyters, and all consecrations of bishops shall be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration."

"THE INITIAL MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH.

"The uniting Churches agree

"(1) that the bishops of the dioceses of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon which are to be included in the united Church shall be accepted as bishops of the united Church, provided that they assent to the Basis of Union and accept the Constitution of the united Church;

and that all the other ministers of the uniting Churches in the area of the union shall be acknowledged as ministers of the Word and of the Sacraments in the united Church, each retaining the standing (whether as a minister authorized to celebrate the Holy Communion, or as a deacon or a probationer) which he had before union in his own Church, provided similarly that such ministers assent to the Basis

Space → of Union and accept the Constitution of the united Church; and
"(2) that, as is set forth in detail in Section IV of this Scheme, such bishops and other ministers shall, subject only to necessary restrictions in certain directions, retain, (so far as the united Church is concerned) all rights and liberties which they previously possessed in the several uniting Churches.

Space → "(3) These bishops and other ministers, together with the bishops who will be consecrated at the inauguration of the union (see Section XV) shall form the initial ministry of the united Church."

"The uniting Churches agree that it is their intention and expectation that eventually every minister exercising a permanent ministry in the united Church will be an episcopally ordained minister.

Space → "For the thirty years succeeding the inauguration of the union, the ministers of any Church whose missions have founded the originally separate parts of the united Church may be received as ministers of the united Church, if they are willing to give the same assent to the Basis of Union and the same promise to accept the Constitution of the united Church as will be required from persons about to be ordained or employed for the first time in that Church. After this period of thirty years, the united Church will consider and decide the question of such exceptions to the general principle of an episcopally ordained ministry."

"BISHOPS; THEIR FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

"(1) The bishop of the diocese has the general pastoral oversight of all the Christian people of the diocese, and more particularly of the ministers of the Church in the diocese.

Space → "(2) The bishop of the diocese, acting in accordance with the rules laid down in this Constitution concerning the worship of the Church, shall acquaint himself with the various methods of worship and forms of service used in the diocese, shall advise the ministers and congregations in this matter, and shall cause to be prepared and shall issue special services and prayers as they may be required from time to time. He shall have authority in the case of grave irregularities in public worship to forbid their continuance, and any such prohibition shall remain in force pending any action which the Executive Committee of the Synod of the Church may take thereon.

Space → "(3) The bishop of the diocese, acting in accordance with such rules in the matter as may be laid down in this Constitution or by the Synod or by a Diocesan Council, shall receive the names of candidates for ordination who have been approved by the bodies and persons required by the rules, and shall make inquiries from the congregation in which the candidate is best known and also from persons to whom he is known (who shall include laity and not fewer than three ministers); and if he considers the candidate fit to be ordained, he shall bring his name before the Diocesan Council or some other body appointed for the purpose, and if it is agreed by the Council or by that body that the candidate should be ordained, the bishop may ordain him, provided he is assured that he will receive some charge or other definite work.

Note-Rules for the selection and training of candidates for ordination shall be laid down by the Diocesan Councils.

"(4) The bishop of the diocese, acting in accordance with such rules in the matter as may be laid down in this Constitution or by the Synod, will give authorizations to ministers to officiate and to preach in the

diocese. The location of the ministers shall also be carried out by the bishop of the diocese, after such consultation with diocesan committees or other bodies as may be prescribed by the rules of the diocese.

Synod "(5) The bishop of the diocese alone shall have the power to pronounce sentence of suspension from Holy Communion or of excommunication in disciplinary cases, but he shall do so only after due enquiry has been made by the Pastorate Committee or Panchayat appointed for the purpose in accordance with the rules of the Diocesan Council. Similarly he shall have power on the recommendation of the Pastorate Committee or Panchayat to restore those that are penitent to the fellowship of the Church.

Synod "(6) Charges against a minister shall in the first instance be submitted to the bishop of the diocese, and he shall if possible settle the matter by personal enquiry and advice and, if necessary, admonition, or in grave cases temporary suspension of the authorisation of the minister concerned. But if the bishop shall consider, or the accused minister demand, that the case should be referred to the Court of the Diocesan Council, it shall be so referred. A bishop may not withdraw his authorisation permanently from a presbyter except by way of carrying out a sentence duly passed by the Court of the Diocesan Council, or in cases where the presbyter voluntarily submits himself to the decision of the bishop.

Synod "(7) The bishop of the diocese shall be president of the Diocesan Council, and shall have the right to take part in the proceedings of any standing committee, board or council of the diocese. He shall have the right of suspending the operation of decisions or resolutions of the Diocesan Council which directly concern:

- Synod*
- (a) the faith and doctrine of the Church,
 - (b) the conditions of membership in the Church,
 - (c) the functions of the ordained ministers of the Church,
- or (d) the worship of the Church and any forms of worship proposed for general use in the Church.

Synod "(8) Every bishop of a diocese shall ex officio be a member of the Synod of the Church.

Synod "(9) The bishop of the diocese shall not as bishop or as president of the Diocesan Council have any control over the finance of the diocese.

Synod "(10) The bishop of the diocese shall remain such for life, unless he resign, or accept the charge of another diocese, or depart permanently from the diocese, or be deprived of his charge by sentence of the Court of the Synod, or be adjudged by the Executive Committee of the Synod to be mentally or physically incapable of discharging the duties of his office.

Synod "(11) In the event of any bishop seeming to the Moderator to be gravely unsuited to retain charge of his diocese it shall be the duty of the Moderator to take council with the other diocesan bishops, and if they concur in his judgment, to lay their views before the bishop concerned.

Synod "(12) The bishop of the diocese may appoint a commissary either under a general commission to act for him in the diocese during the bishop's absence from his diocese or incapacity to discharge his duties as bishop, or under a special commission to perform on his behalf some particular duty named in the commission. The appointment of a general commissary must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council.

A diocesan bishop cannot authorize his commissary to represent him in the Synod or in any committee or board thereof, or to exercise his suspensory power over decisions and resolutions of the Diocesan Council,

nor can he (unless the commissary be himself a bishop) delegate to him his powers of ordination or of confirmation."

"THE ELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS.

"(1) In every election of a bishop both the diocese concerned and the Synod shall have an effective voice.

Space "(2) Both the Synod and the Diocesan Council shall have the right of making nominations of candidates to be voted upon by the Diocesan Council, but the nominations made by the Synod shall be of not more than three names, and shall not include the name of any person resident in the diocese.

Space "(3) From the combined list of nominations the Diocesan Council shall elect not less than two and not more than four persons, all of whom must be supported by not less than two-thirds of the number of members of the Diocesan Council present and voting, and shall submit the list of their elections to a board consisting of the Moderator and six members appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod. This board shall appoint a bishop for the diocese from among the names submitted by the Diocesan Council.

Space "(4) The Diocesan Council may if it so desire remit the whole election to a Board of the Synod composed as in Rule 3.

Space "(5) If a Diocesan Council fails within a prescribed time to fulfil the requirements of Rule 3 or Rule 4, a bishop shall be appointed for the diocese by the Executive Committee of the Synod.

Space "(6) Every appointment of a Bishop shall be subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee of the Synod, which shall for this purpose include all the diocesan bishops; but this confirmation may not be withheld except when either the election or appointment shall have been proved to have been invalid, or the Executive Committee shall judge the person appointed to be unfit in respect of character, conduct or teaching to exercise the functions of a bishop.

Space "(7) The Synod will prescribe a form of consecration of bishops, in which, while provision may be made for extempore prayer and other elements of spontaneity and variety, there shall be certain invariable parts; these to include at least (i) a consecratory prayer, asking that the person to be consecrated may receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit for the office and work of a bishop in His Church, and (ii) the laying on of hands at least by three bishops, with the words (if any) accompanying it. The consecration of a bishop shall normally take place in the course of the Communion Service.

Space "(8) No person may be consecrated as bishop unless he has been ordained as a presbyter, and also attained the age of thirty years."

"THE APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING BISHOPS.

"Under the proposals made in Section XVI of this Scheme, the dioceses of the United Church will not be established till perhaps five years after the inauguration of the union, and in any case they would not come into existence before the date of union.

Space "The Joint Committee therefore proposes that the bishops who are to be consecrated at the inauguration of the union should be selected and appointed as follows:

Space (a) That the final selection and appointment of those bishops be made by a central body composed of representatives of the General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, the General Assembly of the South India United Church, and the South India Provin-

Space → cial Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church;
"(b) that this central body make its selection from lists of names to be submitted by the central authorities of the uniting Churches in the area of the union, which they should prepare in consultation with the synods and councils under them, indicating in their lists the language area or areas to which each person proposed could most appropriately be appointed as bishop."

These provisions have been attacked from both sides. The High Church party, led by Bishop Gore, declared that they surrendered the essential principles of the Church of England with regard to the historic episcopate, and Bishop Gore has threatened to leave the Church if the plan is approved. He has not said where he would go. The scheme has been attacked with almost equal vigor from the other side in articles in "The United Church Review", the organ of the United Church of North India which is ably edited by one of our younger missionaries, the Rev. J. W. Bowman, on the ground that our Presbyterian system ought not to yield to the Episcopal scheme even as defined in the proposed scheme of union.

The scheme has met with the official approval of the Church Missionary Society which is, as you know, the great evangelical missionary organization of the Church of England, representing moderate churchmanship as opposed to the High Anglicanism of the "Catholic party."

Mr. Cash has sent us the copy of the action of the Executive Committee which has now been adopted by the General Committee of the Church Missionary Society. You will perhaps wish to have the full action of the Church Missionary Society:

"A PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME OF UNION FOR SOUTH INDIA
Adopted by the General Committee of the C.M.S. December 10, 1929.

"Prepared by the Ecclesiastical Committee and approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 27th November 1929.

"1. The Committee of the Church Missionary Society having considered The Proposed Scheme of Union prepared by the Joint Committee representing the Anglican Church, the South India United Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in South India, for presentation to the governing bodies of the Churches concerned in India and elsewhere, thanks God for the advance that has been made in South India towards the restoration of Christian unity and the elimination of the scandal of ecclesiastical divisions. The committee places on record its profound sense of the guidance of the Holy Spirit revealed in the history of the negotiations and also its recognition of the spirit of Christian love and evangelistic zeal which pervades the proposals.

Space → "2. The C.M.S. is interested in the scheme on several grounds. The Society recognizes with thankfulness in the proposed terms of union the acceptance of the four basic facts of faith and order laid down in the Lambeth declaration of 1888 as the ground of unity, thus keeping the way open for a future wider reunion of an episcopal basis. It also welcomes the desire of the Anglican Church in South India to unite with other reformed Churches, since such a desire is in line with the guiding principles of the Society's policy from the earliest days of its history. The Society has never conceived of the differences between the Church of England and the other reformed Churches as being of such a kind as to be ultimately irreconcilable; out, just as it has always recognized the essential identity of the Gospel message proclaimed by missionaries and

ministers of those Churches with that which it has sought to proclaim, so it has confidently hoped to find some basis upon which a more formal union could be established.

Space → "3. The C.H.S. has also a particular responsibility in this matter, since the large majority of Indian Christians of the Anglican Communion in the four dioceses concerned (Dornakal, Madras, Tinnevely, Travancore, and Cochin) are within the Society's missions. Moreover, it cannot be too widely known that the desire for unity in South India proceeds primarily from the Indian Christians themselves and has been consistently voiced by the Indian church leaders as well as by missionaries, representing all groups and schools of thought, who have taken part in the proceedings.

Space → "The desire for unity on the part of Christians in South India proceeds from two chief sources. They long to share the fellowship of the Spirit in an Indian Church which shall in its unity abolish the existing ecclesiastical divisions, which are of foreign origin, and transcend the caste divisions of the Indian social order. They also wish to have a united Church as the divinely appointed means to a more rapid advance in the evangelization of a great but predominantly non-Christian land. That 'unity for evangelization' should be a compelling ideal in these young Churches is a matter for special encouragement to a Society which has been largely instrumental, under God's providence, in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel in South India.

Space → "4. In the claim of the proposed United Church for autonomy the Committee sees not only the expression of a legitimate desire for Christian freedom but also the fulfilment of the work of the foreign mission foreshadowed in the ideals for missionary policy announced so long ago as 1851 by Henry Venn. At the same time the readiness and care of the United Church to retain full communion with other branches of the uniting Churches, both in India and elsewhere, obviates that weakening of the universal character of Christianity which would attend the establishment of such a Church as merely a national unit. The Committee welcomes the frank recognition shown by the authors of the scheme of the fact that the Christian Churches which are taking form among the Asiatic and African peoples possess the responsibilities and powers of autonomous parts of the Catholic Church.

Space → "5. The Committee desires to recognize the wisdom of the several Churches in South India revealed in their decision to leave for subsequent adjustment certain matters of real ecclesiastical importance but yet of a secondary character. By the provision of a period in which these Churches may grow into full spiritual unity and find the solution of certain questions now left open in a new and united life and experience, there is indicated the determination to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit the Guide and Teacher of the Church.

Space → "The Committee believes that the more closely the suggested provisional arrangements are examined the more clear it will become that they do not violate the historic traditions of the Church of England; it also believes that there are sufficient precedents in the history of the Church of England at home to justify the sanctioning of the South Indian proposals by the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. Those who demand in regard to an adventure of faith which aims at Christian unity, that all the possible results of action shall be shown in advance to be manageable and safe are, in effect, insisting that the policy of the Church shall be governed rather by human prudence than by courageous faith in the

guidance of the Holy Spirit. Not thus did the apostolic leaders of the Church legislate in the first creative period of its history.

Spore "6. On behalf of a Society, which represents an important part of the Church of England organized for evangelization overseas; the Committee has taken careful account of the fact that while they have not yet pronounced on the scheme in its present form, the bishops in the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon have approved the main principle underlying the proposed union. The General Council of that Church, having considered the proposals brought before it by the Episcopal Synod, unanimously passed the following resolution at its meeting in February 1928:

'Remembering that the Constitutional Episcopate has been accepted for the united Church, and that the clearly expressed intention is to secure an episcopally ordained ministry throughout the Church, we are prepared with a view to bridging over the period till this is fully attained, that to all who at the time of union are ministers of the uniting Churches should be accorded after union the position of ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the united Church.'

"The Committee is also satisfied that none of the proposals relating to Church order go beyond the terms of the Lambeth Appeal of 1920. The principles upon which the recognition and adjustment of existing ministries in the united Church should be made in the interim period appear to be the natural application of the terms of that Appeal and the Memorandum of the Church of England representatives on the Joint Conference which followed the last Lambeth Conference.

Spore "7. The Committee, therefore, after much thought and prayer desires to express its cordial approval of the principles of the scheme for unity as now drafted. In doing so it is confident that it represents the feeling and judgment of the very great majority of the members of the Society, who will be prepared strongly to support the scheme, primarily because they believe that the movement which has led to it is in accordance with the mind of Christ. The Committee hopes that all Christian churches and agencies concerned, may together pray and labour for the consummation of this union, moving forward as partners together in the task of building up the ever-growing Catholic Church, which is the Body of Christ upon earth."

There have been many articles written on this whole question. One of the most illuminating series is in the January issue of Sir Henry Lunn's large quarterly, "The Review of the Churches." This issue was given up chiefly to a discussion of the South India scheme, and the writers represent both the favorable and the antagonistic views.

At the meeting of the General Assembly of the United Church of North India held in Lahore in December, of which Dr. Velte was the Moderator, a deputation from the Methodist Episcopal Church presented a proposal for union. In presenting this proposal Dr. Stanley Jones dealt with the question of the episcopacy in the terms in which it is known in the Methodist Episcopal Church. A summary of his address in the Indian Christian paper "Dnyanodaya" of January 23, 1930, as follows:

"Fathers and Brethren! I find that you use the same form of address as we do. I began life in the M.E. Church South. Later we moved one mile and I joined the M.E. Church(North). So my deep-seated conviction in this matter of Church polity resulted from our family moving one mile!

"The Churches are all being cross-fertilized, whether we like it or not. Below the surface of our ecclesiasticism, we strike the same note of experience together, and we are one in the deepest and most penetrating facts of our life. What hinders us from being literally one? Mainly extraneous things. I am not usually in the role of representing a denomination. I want here to represent an attitude. We yearn for a larger fellowship. We find ourselves close, yet distant. We Methodists are one of the hardest nuts to crack in Church union discussions. We have had no part in the South India negotiations, because, frankly, they do not know what to do with us. Our bishops are not sufficiently valid for them. With you, on the other hand, they are too valid!

"There is also with us the international difficulty. We are the only Church which is trying to project an international Church. Our General Conference (in America) has representatives from all the world, and we are working together for racial solidarity. Is it better for us to lose our internationalism for the sake of local union? It is not an easy choice for us.

"Our bishops are frankly a difficulty in the way of union. I was a bishop for twenty-four hours, and so I know how it is. They are frankly not valid as regards the past. To my mind, the question is not, 'Are they valid?' but 'Are they vital?' Use the pragmatic test. I simply yawn when people talk about validity of the past. I think that on the whole, they are vital. You have an ingrained prejudice against bishops, which we share with you. Our bishops were not so called by Wesley; they were called 'General Superintendents.' We are willing to let the term 'bishop' go, and call them by the earlier title.

"Now what our Commission authorizes me to say is this: You are united at the top, but not at the bottom, except loosely. You could not be looser and come into a union to contain us as we are. Could your group and ours come together, and let us retain our international solidarity and our bishops as we are? We do not say, 'Take our bishops,' unless you like them. But let us keep them for ourselves. If you like them, you can take them later. We do not say, 'Have episcopal form, or presbyterial or congregational.' Put the three together and live together, and see what comes out! I am not proposing 'companionate marriage,' but it is something like that!

"Could you make the jump and take in episcopal supervision? Our bishops are amenable to reason, when backed by the General Conference. They are only presiding officers, and have no vote, and do not discuss. We decide, and they execute. They are assigned to work for four years, and then we may put any of them on the shelf, if we wish. Sometimes men who have been loud in discussion have been voted to the silence of the episcopal bench!

"Bishops as executive officers are able to swing great things quickly. Democracies are slow to act. I find that in your system churches frequently are unable for some time to elect pastors. Bishops would settle the matter in an hour.

"Could we leave alone the local situation for the present, and come together in some great central gathering? Our Indian people are not yet ready to give up their international solidarity, and require education. The General Conference has given us the power in India to elect bishops, either for a term or for life. If term bishops are appointed, the margin between them and your moderators is narrowed.

"Once a little girl was trying to put together a puzzle map of the United States, and could not do it, until she discovered that on the back was the face of George Washington, which she knew and loved. So she put

that together, and when she turned it over, she found that the map of the United States was there all complete! Could we not start back with the face of Christ, be one in Him, and then if we turn our map, we would find ourselves united!

Sp. "We are one with you in holding to the equality of every believer. Let us begin at the centre, and not try to tinker at the margin. If you can make your cords longer, and set your stakes farther out, you will find us ready to accompany you. India is struggling to be united politically and socially. We cannot face this struggle, unless we are united. The Church cannot speak a valid word to India of today unless it is united. I believe that word can be spoken."

Following this address and subsequent discussion, the General Assembly of the United Church of North India took action as follows:

"RESOLVED, that the Assembly is disposed to recognize, with profound thankfulness, divine leading in the unexpected invitation extended on behalf of their Union Commission by the fraternal delegates from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that we present to them now an outline of a union scheme which may be used for the education of their people in view of the Central Conference meeting due at the end of 1930.

Sp. "That the Assembly rejoices to learn that the Church Polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church includes the three factors embodied in the Lucknow Resolution on this subject; that in the administration of the sacraments there is no essential difference between the Methodists and ourselves; that they, like us, accept the common faith of the Christian Church throughout the ages in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; and that while the international connection is valued the Central Conference is in process of becoming more and more autonomous.

Sp. "That the Assembly submits for the consideration of either the Union Commission or the Executive Board (meeting in February 1930) of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or (preferably) of both ^{these} Bodies, the following outline of a Union scheme, subject to amplification or modification by the next Round Table Conference, which, it is hoped, will be summoned at as early a date as possible:-

"DRAFT SCHEME OF UNION WITH THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

"(Note:-It is understood that this Union may come into operation only after it has been duly passed by the parties concerned, viz., by the Methodist Central Conference 1930 and General Conference (meeting in America in May 1932) and by the United Church of Northern India Church Councils and General Assembly, or its Executive Committee (say in 1931). It may thus be possible for this union to be consummated and inaugurated at the General Assembly due to be held in ordinary course towards the end of 1932. This, however, may depend on whether Wesleyans, Baptists or others also decide to join.)

"RESOLVED, that the two Churches recognize each other as belonging to one body in Christ and determined to work together as one Church.

"That, uniting on the constitutional basis suggested in the Lucknow Resolutions and on their common acceptance of the faith of the Christian Church of all ages in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, they agree to respect each other's confession, organization and discipline, until such time as complete amalgamation is found feasible.

"That, to begin with, the union be made a reality by the Methodist Central Conference appointing delegates to the General Assembly, which will thus become the Supreme Court, and may thenceforth be called the General Council

of the United Church.

→ "That in preparation for this hope--for union the Assembly sanction immediate attempts being made to cooperate on these and similar lines, viz.,

- (a) In theological education.
- (b) In a Church magazine.
- (c) Through interchange of Ministers.
- (d) By visits of fraternal delegates from Church Councils to Annual Conferences, and vice versa, in the various areas.
- (e) That we invite the Methodist Bishops to include our congregations in their visits, and that likewise our Moderator be prepared if invited, to visit theirs.

"That the Assembly authorize its Committee on Church Union to take charge of this Union proposal, and, when sufficient progress has been made (which may possibly be judged to be after the next Round Table Conference or after the meeting of the Methodist Central Conference in the end of 1930), after further consideration by the representatives of the M.E. Church and the United Church of Northern India, with the representatives of any other Church or Churches prepared to go forward to union on the lines now laid down, to forward the scheme to the Executive Committee of Assembly, in order that it may take the opinion of Church Councils as expeditiously as the constitution permits, and thereafter either announce the decision, should it be unmistakable, or, if thought more advisable, summon a special meeting of Assembly at some date before the meeting of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America in May 1932.

→ "That in future fraternal delegates from any sister Church willing to send them be welcomed at the General Assembly."

This action is not altogether clear to me but Dr. Velte will be able to explain it fully when he arrives on his coming furlough in April.

In the light of the information now supplied, will it not be helpful for the Board to discuss, at least in a preliminary way, the fundamental issue that is involved?

Very faithfully yours,

Robert E. Spier

RES: